A SENSE OF TEXT

THE ART OF LANGUAGE IN THE STUDY OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE

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HOW DOES PARALLELISM MEAN?

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"HOW* OFTEN LIFE has a literary design," said the American poet and critic Delmore Schwartz.[1] Although life may often seem to display striking confirmation of Schwartz's comment, the truth, of course, is the reverse. Our minds perceive in patterns, it is part of our nature. Were we presented with "a series of sounds precisely equal in loudness, pitch, and length," we would unconsciously group the sounds into a rhythmic pattern and thereby superimpose a design.[2] Experience comes organized, and sense reaches us only through form. The meaning that language conveys shifts with any change in linguistic configuration, and the careful writer—not to mention the literary artist—will watch his or her words, sounds, cadences, and syntax. The careful student of literature, which epitomizes the artful use of language, will also pay heed to the linguistic devices of the text at hand. For it is the manipulation of linguistic structures that constitutes verbal art, and linguistic form that controls our apperception of sense or meaning.[3] Ultimately, the meaning of a text emerges from the

* The present paper incorporates part of a paper entitled "Getting to the Bottom of Biblical Parallelism," which was presented at the 1981 annual meeting of the American Oriental Society. A draft of the present essay was presented at the Columbia University Hebrew Bible Seminar and at a symposium at Dropsie College, both in Spring 1982. Preparation of this study was assisted by the Abbell Research Fund of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America.

[1] James Atlas, *Delmore Schwartz: The Life of an American Poet* (New York, 1977), p. 227.

[2] Seymour Chatman, *A Theory of Meter* (The Hague, 1965), p. 25. Cf. Robert Haas, "Listening and Making," *Antaeus*, 40/41 (1981), 488–509.

[3] For a relatively early linguistic orientation toward Biblical poetics, see Luis Alonso Schökel, *Estudios de poética hebrea* (Barcelona, 1963); consult, e.g., pp. 205–10. See in general the excellent fundamental presentation by Jurij Lotman, *The Structure of the Artistic Text*, tr. G. Lenhoff and R. Vroon (Ann Arbor, 1977). Cf. now also Roman Jakobson, "A Postscript to the Discussion on Grammar of Poetry," *Diacritics*, 10/1 (Spring, 1980), 22–35; and the special issue of *Poetics Today*, 2/1a (Autumn, 1980), entitled "Roman Jakobson: Language

interaction between the stimuli of the text and the responses of the various readers or hearers to those stimuli.[4] In discussing the meaning of a text it is therefore necessary to consider not only its semantics but also, quite as importantly, its rhetorical impact. That is why I have entitled this essay after a famous book on poetics by John Ciardi,[5] "How Does Parallelism Mean?"

The study of Biblical poetics has until recently devoted itself largely to the side of the author or bard. Analysis has focused on compositional techniques, as well as on evidence of oral composition and performance.[6] Parallelism, conventional motifs and *topoi*, meter, chiasm, and other variations in word-order, and perhaps above all word-pairs in parallelism have typically been explained as devices to help the bard in composing and memorizing his poetic pieces, or (in the case of variation) as methods of avoiding monotony.[7] There can be no doubt that the ancient Hebrew poets were heirs to a literary tradition with an array of sophisticated techniques. Nor can anyone question the fact that the Biblical poet had to train in order to master the conventional methods of versification.[8] But upon reflection it seems almost trivial to understand the art of Biblical verse as being of chief importance to the bard who declaimed it. The truly significant question is: In what ways do the devices of Biblical poetry control the audience's perception of the message? In what ways does

and Poetry." For a critical discussion of this linguistic approach to poetics, see Jonathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics* (Ithaca, 1975); and Victor Erlich, "Roman Jakobson: Grammar of Poetry and Poetry of Grammar," in Seymour Chatman, ed., *Approaches to Poetics* (New York, 1973), pp. 1–27.

[4] Cf., e.g., Jane P. Tomkins, ed., *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism* (Baltimore, 1980).

[5] John Ciardi, *How Does a Poem Mean?* (Boston, 1959).

[6] For a survey and critical discussion, see William R. Watters, *Formula Criticism and the Poetry of the Old Testament* (Berlin, 1976).

[7] So, e.g., Stanley Gevirtz, *Patterns in the Early Poetry of Israel* (Chicago, 1963), especially pp. 10–11; Robert C. Culley, *Oral Formulaic Language in the Biblical Psalms* (Toronto, 1967); William Whallon, *Formula, Character, and Context: Studies in Homeric, Old English, and Old Testament Poetry* (Washington, 1969), especially pp. 144ff.; Perry B. Yoder, "A-B Pairs and Oral Composition in Hebrew Poetry," *VT*, 21 (1971), 470–89; Robert Gordis, *Poets, Prophets, and Sages* (Bloomington, 1971), pp. 72ff.

[8] Cf. Julius A. Brewer, *The Literature of the Old Testament*, 3rd ed. rev. by Emil G. Kraeling (New York, 1962), pp. 21–22.

Hebrew verse attract, appeal to, and move its audience?[9] Certainly the ancient Hebrew poets sought to affect their hearers, perhaps to amuse them as well. If the use of parallelism, meter, word-pairs, and the like had chiefly served the needs of the bard and did not engage an audience, the poets and prophets of ancient Israel would have played to an empty house.

That this was not the case is evident from the end of Ezekiel 33. There the prophet discovers to his dismay that his fellow exiles flock to listen to his speeches yet do not follow up on the substance of his remarks. If one may paraphrase the Lord's words to Ezekiel (33:30–32), he says to him: "Son of Man, your fellow exiles say to one another, 'Come, let's listen to what the Lord has to say today.' So they come and sit at your feet. To them you are merely a sweetly sung tune, a well-played melody. They hear your words, but they don't obey them."

The ancient Hebrew poet exploited a large repertoire of linguistic devices in formulating his verse, among them parallelism. I hope to show that parallelism serves various functions and produces different sorts of effects in the Bible. But before one can properly understand how parallelism means, one must acquire a specific notion of what parallelism is.

Biblicists have for centuries used the term "parallelism" to refer to the repetition of the components of one line of verse in the following line or lines. It could be a repetition of sense, or words, or sound, or rhythm, or morphology, or syntax, or any combination of these. Gerard Manley Hopkins, both a leading poet and a theoretician of poetry, said that "the artifice of [all] poetry 'reduces itself to the principle of parallelism': equivalent entities confront one another by appearing in equivalent positions."[10] Hopkins, however, used the term "parallelism" here for what linguists have more recently and more precisely called a "repetition of sames."[11] The repetition of sound takes the forms of

[9] These ~~quotations~~ have received extensive attention recently in the works of Yehoshua Gitay: "Deutero-Isaiah: Oral or Written?" *JBL*, 99 (1980), 185–97; "A Study of Amos's Art of Speech: A Rhetorical Analysis of Amos 3:1–15," *CBQ*, 42 (1980), 293–309; *Prophecy and Persuasion: A Study of Isaiah 40–48* (Bonn, 1981).

questions

[10] Roman Jakobson, "Grammatical Parallelism and Its Russian Facet," *Language*, 42 (1966), 423. Cf. Lotman, *The Structure of the Artistic Text*, p. 166.

[11] Paul Kiparsky, "The Role of Linguistics in a Theory of Poetry," *Daedalus*, 102/3 (Summer, 1973), especially p. 233; cf. R. Jakobson, "Linguistics and

rhyme, assonance, alliteration; the repetition of accentual pattern we call rhythm. Biblicists tend to think of parallelism as a nebula of diverse phenomena, a congeries of phonetic, semantic, morphological, and syntactic correspondences.[12]

The term "parallelism" comes to us from geometry, where it describes a very particular structural relationship between two lines. We shall be using this term, as do many linguists and students of general poetics, to refer to an analogously structural notion: the repetition of a syntactic pattern.[13] Thus we revert to the definition of parallelism set forth by Casanowicz back in

Poetics," in Thomas A. Sebeok, ed., *Syle in Language* (Cambridge, Mass., 1960), especially p. 368; and Samuel R. Levin, *Linguistic Structures in Poetry* (The Hague, 1962), p. 21 and passim, who speaks of "equivalence classes"; and cf. now the discussion and references in James L. Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism and Its History* (New Haven, 1981), p. 23 and n. 54.

[12] Cf. Benjamin Hrushovski, "Prosody, Hebrew," *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Jerusalem, 1971), XIII, 1200–01; Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry*, especially p. 49. In the classic modern definition of parallelism, Robert Lowth understood it to be either one or both of two different things: a repetition of the syntactic structure of one utterance in the following utterance, or a repetition of semantic content from one colon to the next; see George Buchanan Gray, *The Forms of Hebrew Poetry* (reprint, New York, 1972), especially pp. 48–49. Most treatments of parallelism since Lowth have emphasized the function of semantic repetition; cf., e.g., Eduard König, *Stilistik, Rhetorik, Poetik in Bezug auf die biblische Litteratur komparativisch* (Leipzig, 1900), pp. 308–13; William Popper, "Notes on Parallelism," *HUCA*, 2 (1925), 63–85, especially p. 71; Robert G. Boling, "'Synonymous' Parallelism in the Psalms," *JSS*, 5 (1960), 211–55; Norman K. Gottwald, "Poetry, Hebrew," *IDB* (Nashville, 1962), III, 830–34; Yoder, "A-B Pairs and Oral Composition," especially p. 480; M. Z. Kaddari, "A Semantic Approach to Biblical Parallelism," *JJSt*, 24 (1973), 167–75; Gordis, *Poets, Prophets, and Sages*, p. 72 and passim; Otto Kaiser, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, tr. J. Sturdy (Minneapolis, 1975), p. 321; Jacob Licht, "Poetry," *Encyclopedia Biblica*, (Jerusalem, 1976), VII, 642–43 (in Hebrew). Francis I. Andersen, *The Sentence in Biblical Hebrew* (The Hague, 1974), p. 38, has held that parallelism must entail an equivalence "in *both* meaning and grammatical structure" (italics mine). Bronznick's "metathetic parallelism" likewise combines syntactic and lexical parallelism; Norman M. Bronznick, "'Metathetic Parallelism': An Unrecognized Subtype of Synonymous Parallelism," *Hebrew Annual Review*, 3 (1979), 25–39.

[13] Cf., e.g., Robert Austerlitz, *Ob-Ugric Metrics* (Helsinki, 1958), especially p. 45; idem, "The Artistic Devices of Romanian Folk Poetry," *Romanian Folk Arts* (New York, 1976), pp. 70–76; Kiparsky, "The Role of Linguistics," especially p. 233.

1905: "By parallelism . . . is understood the regularly recurring juxtaposition of symmetrically constructed sentences."[14]

One of the reasons that parallelism has been conceived of as a catch-all phenomenon is that Biblicists have assumed that all or nearly all of ancient Hebrew verse is parallelistic. Whatever goes on between two lines is nonchalantly dubbed parallelism.[15] If one

[14] I. M. Casanowicz, "Parallelism in Hebrew Poetry," *Jewish Encyclopedia* (New York, 1905), IX, 520b.

M. O'Connor uses the term "matching," rather than "parallelism," to represent the repetition of syntactic structure in his *Hebrew Verse Structure* (Winona Lake, Indiana, 1980), especially pp. 118–21. My understanding of parallelism is essentially the same as O'Connor's concept of matching, but I am, I suppose, more hopeful than he of spreading our shared notion of what parallelism is among Biblicists. I would refine the term while he would replace it.

The importance of the syntactic analysis of Biblical verse has also been underlined and illustrated by Terence Collins in his *Line-Forms in Hebrew Poetry* (Rome, 1978) and in the article-length summary of the book published in *JSS*, 23 (1978), 228–44. I am sympathetic to Collins' overall approach, except that he operates on the surface order of constituents to the exclusion of deep structure. Were he to recognize parallelism in deep structure, too, certain of his categories could be combined.

Stephen A. Geller has extensively treated "grammatical" parallelism in his *Parallelism in Early Hebrew Poetry* (Missoula, 1979). Besides the fact that he sees parallelism in the semantic domain too, my basic difference with Geller is that he uses "transformation" as a heuristic device to effect a match between the syntax of two hemistichs. I use "transformation," as transformational-generative linguists do, to denote the syntactic operations by which deep structure is mapped onto surface structure. Where two lines have different surface structures, I first try to examine their deep structures before determining whether they are parallel. Geller understands that "in all cases of strict parallelism (and repetition) it should be possible to reduce the couplet to a single statement which has been restated binarily" (p. 16). Thus he views a bicolon much as E. Z. Melamed did before him ("Hendiadys in the Bible," *Tarbiz*, 16 [1945], 173–89, especially 180–89 [in Hebrew]). In fact, certain verses were already interpreted in like manner according to the 19th canon of exegesis attributed to R. Eliezer ben. R. Yose the Galilean: מִדָּבָר שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר כֹּה וְהוּא הַדִּין לַחֲבֵירוֹ, "An item stated in one clause forms part of the parallel clause, too." An example is Ps. 97:11, which is interpreted to mean, "The righteous has light sown (for him) in joy, and the upright of heart have joy and light sown (for them)." My difficulty with this perspective is that it tends to undermine the break between parallel clauses and the structural repetition involved (with or without deletion) from one clause to the next.

[15] Thus Adele Berlin, "Grammatical Aspects of Biblical Parallelism," *HUCA*, 50 (1979), 17–43, virtually equates parallelism with the mere juxtaposition of two (or more) lines, defining "syntactic parallelism" as "parallel stichs with different syntax" (p. 21).

understands parallelism as an essentially syntactic device, then many consecutive lines of Hebrew poetry are not parallel. The repetition of syntactic structure from line to line is by no means a universal feature of Biblical verse. Nevertheless, if one applies a transformational-generative analysis[16] to ancient Hebrew poetry, one finds that parallelism in our sense of it is more widespread than might appear at first blush, and that many, if not most, cases of so-called "synthetic" parallelism involve not a continuation of structure—which is the traditional view and is true of many Biblical lines—but a repetition of structure.

In order to reveal a repetition of syntactic patterning one must of necessity examine not only the surface structure of the line but also its more abstract underlying relations. Studies of meter, rhyme, and—to a lesser degree—parallelism in literature from other than Biblical sources demonstrate that poets intuitively employ patterning that may at times be perceptible only below the surface. As Kiparsky had indicated a number of years ago, "even the strictest parallelism allows divergence of surface structure according to certain types of transformational rules that delete and reorder constituents."[17] The claim that deep structure must be considered in analyzing Biblical verse finds undeniable support in instances where the verb of the A colon is shared by the B colon and is deleted. The verb may be deleted even when it disagrees in number or gender with the subject of the second clause. Note the following two examples:

Trembling has-seized-them there Shaking like-a-birthing-woman (has-seized-them). (Ps. 48:7)	רְעָדָה אָחָזַתַם שָׁם חִיל כַּיּוֹלֵדָה
The-plan-of YHWH will-stand-forever	עֲצַת ה' לְעוֹלָם תַּעֲמֹד

[16] Among the many introductions to transformational-generative syntax are: D. Terence Langendoen, *The Study of Syntax* (New York, 1969); Ronald W. Langacker, *Language and Its Structure*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1973), pp. 103–44; and Robert P. Stockwell, *Foundations of Syntactic Theory* (Englewood Cliffs, 1977).

[17] Kiparsky, "The Role of Linguistics," p. 237; cf. Levin, *Linguistic Structures in Poetry*, pp. 33–37; Raymond Chapman, *Linguistics and Literature* (Totowa, N.J., 1973), pp. 55–56.

The-designs-of his-heart (will-stand) forever. (Ps. 33:11)	מַחְשְׁבוֹת לִבּוֹ לְדֹר וָדֹר

In the first case a deleted feminine verb-form serves a masculine noun in the second line, and in the second case a deleted singular verb serves a plural noun in the second line. Obviously it is the abstract sense of the verb, and not its surface form, that is underlying in the second line of both verses.

It is only by acknowledging deep structure that the following verse, Ps. 50:8, makes sense:

Not for-your-sacrifices do-I-reprove-you	לֹא עַל־זְבָחֶיךָ אוֹכִיחֶךָּ
(Nor for) your-burnt-offerings ever before-me (do-I-reprove-you).	וְעוֹלֹתֶיךָ לְנֶגְדִּי תָמִיד

Ignoring deep structure the second line would mean:

And-your-burnt-offerings are-ever before-me.

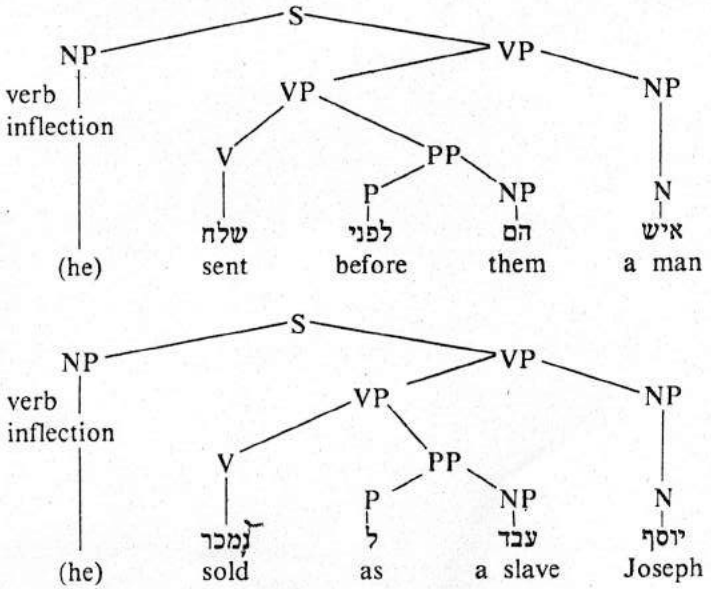
This creates a ludicrous non-sequitur. Clearly the second line must be understood as it usually has been, to contain the phrases "not for" and "do-I-reprove-you" in its deep structure, although these constituents are deleted in the surface representation.[18] Illustrations such as this suffice to establish the need to examine deep as well as surface structure in the analysis of parallelism.

Parallelism may not be evident superficially, but it may be present deep down. It is commonplace in generative theory, for example, that a passive sentence is but a transformation of an active one. The sentence *The ball was hit by Joe* involves a passivizing transformation of the sentence *Joe hit the ball*. The deep structure of the sentence *The ball was hit by Joe* is identical to the deep structure of the sentence *Mickey swung the bat*. Two cola in Biblical verse may also be perceived as parallel once the analyst peels away a passivizing transformation and reveals a deeper level in the derivation of the sentence. A case in point is Ps. 105:17. The text reads:

[18] On the grammatical deletion of the negative, naively termed "double duty" service by Biblicists, see already R. David Qimḥi's commentary to Ps. 50:8; cf. M. Dahood, *Psalms. I* (Garden City, N.Y., 1965), p. 307.

He (God) sent a man ahead of them	שָׁלַח לִפְנֵיהֶם אִישׁ
Joseph was sold as a slave.	לְעֶבֶד נִמְכַּר יוֹסֵף

On the surface the two lines differ in syntactic structure. However, if one removes the passivization[19] involved in the second line, a case of parallelism materializes.[20] Consult the diagram.[21]



[19] For a similar analysis of the *nifʿal* verb in Biblical Hebrew, see Menaḥem Z. Kaddari, *Studies in Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Ramat Gan, 1976), p. 37 [in Hebrew]; for the passive in general, see ibid., p. 43.

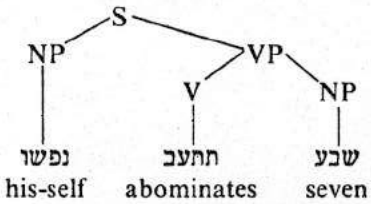
[20] Of course, clauses with different deep structures but the same surface structure also function as parallel. For an excellent example, see Berlin, "Grammatical Aspects of Biblical Parallelism," p. 42.

[21] The diagram should be read as follows. The colon in question comprises a sentence (S), which consists of a subject (or topic) represented by a noun-phrase (NP) and a predicate (or comment) represented by a verb-phrase (VP). The NP is manifested in this case through the pronominal inflection of the verb ("he"). The VP comprises a VP and an object in the form of a NP. The VP itself comprises a verb (V) and an adverbial modifier in the form of a prepositional phrase (PP), consisting of a preposition (P) and a noun-phrase. The NP which is the direct object of the verb is represented by a noun (N).

In many other instances a causative[22] or nominalizing[23] transformation camouflages the underlying parallelism between two lines. Let me illustrate the second, which is less obvious. Prov. 6:16 reads as follows:

These six YHWH hates	שֵׁשׁ־הֵנָּה שָׂנֵא ה׳
And seven are an abomination to him.	וְשֶׁבַע תּוֹעֲבַת נַפְשׁוֹ

On the surface the two clauses that constitute the couplet do not have the same structure. The first is a verbal sentence of the form object-verb-subject, and the second is a nominal sentence. However, the nominal sentence has a deep structure that virtually matches the surface structure of the first clause:



The idiom נפש תתעב is attested in Ps. 107:18a (כָּל־אֹכֶל תְּתָעֵב נַפְשָׁם "They abominate all food") and the verb occurs elsewhere with pronominal subjects (Deut. 23:8; Ps. 119:163) and even with YHWH as subject (Ps. 5:7).[24] The underlying sequence is transformed into the surface structure by a process that nominalizes the verb and places the resultant verbal noun in construct with its erstwhile subject. The construct chain is then transposed with the underlying object of the verb, שבע, and made into its predicate.[25]

Before moving on to the functions of parallelism in Biblical verse, I wish to explain my contention that cases of so-called

[22] For the deep-structure of *hifʿīl* causatives in Biblical Hebrew, see Mordechai Ben-Asher, "Causative *hipʿīl* Verbs with Double Objects in Biblical Hebrew," *Hebrew Annual Review*, 2 (1978), 11–19; cf. Peter Cole, "A Causative Construction in Modern Hebrew: Theoretical Implications," in idem, ed., *Studies in Modern Hebrew Syntax and Semantics* (Amsterdam, 1976), pp. 99–128.

[23] Cf. Kaddari, *Studies in Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, pp. 39–40 (in Hebrew).

[24] For שנא־תעב as a word pair, cf., e.g., Amos 5:10.

[25] Another example of nominalization is Ps. 49:4, where underlying לבי יהגה (e.g., Isa. 33:18; Prov. 15:28) is nominalized to הגות לבי.

"synthetic" parallelism may actually constitute syntactic parallelism once deep structure is considered.[26]

I have consulted several translations and commentaries on the Psalms, and every one interprets the following verse, Ps. 119:53, as a single continuous sentence.

זַלְעָפָה אֲחָזַתְנִי מֵרְשָׁעִים עֹזְבֵי תּוֹרָתֶךָ

Although the translations differ in whether they place a caesura before or after the word מרשעים, they agree substantially in their renderings. The RSV, for example, translates:

> Hot indignation seizes me because of the wicked, who forsake thy law.[27]

I object to this interpretation on two grounds. First, it fails to regard the very common practice of deletion in the second of two parallel cola.[28] Second, it fails to reckon with the fact that with very few exceptions—which are in themselves nearly always marked stylistically—the first colon of a poetic unit in the Bible comprises a complete clause, and the caesura between cola corresponds to a clause break.[29] As psycholinguistic investigations

[26] Lowth's "synthetic" parallelism is really no parallelism at all; cf. Gray, *The Forms of Hebrew Poetry*, pp. 49–52; Whallon, *Formula, Character, and Context*, p. 141; Geller, *Parallelism in Early Biblical Poetry*, pp. 375–85; David N. Freedman, *Pottery, Poetry, and Prophecy: Studies in Early Hebrew Poetry* (Winona Lake, Indiana, 1980), p. 37; O'Connor, *Hebrew Verse Structure*, p. 33. By perceiving the devices of Biblical poetry in the vaguest way, Kugel is able to conclude that "all parallelism is really 'synthetic': it consists of A, a pause, and A's continuation B (or B+C)" (*The Idea of Biblical Poetry*, p. 58). Note, however, that Kugel quite properly criticizes Lowth's categories (ibid., pp. 12ff.).

My analysis of many instances of "synthetic" parallelism as syntactic parallelism with deletion accounts for most of the examples discussed in Patrick D. Miller, Jr., "Synonymous-Sequential Parallelism in the Psalms," *Biblica*, 61 (1980), 256–60.

[27] Cf., e.g., the older JPS (1917), the newer JPS (1972), the NEB, and the AB.

[28] See on this E. L. Greenstein, "Two Variations of Grammatical Parallelism in Canaanite Poetry and Their Psycholinguistic Background," *JANES*, 6 (1974), especially pp. 89–96; O'Connor, *Hebrew Verse Structure*, pp. 122–29. The proposal of a "pivot pattern" by Watson entirely sidesteps the operation of grammatical deletion and ignores the fact of a clause break in between parallel lines: Wilfred G. E. Watson, "The Pivot Pattern in Hebrew, Ugaritic, and Akkadian Poetry," *ZAW*, 88 (1976), 239–53.

[29] Cf., e.g., Gottwald, "Poetry, Hebrew," (n. 12 above), p. 831a.

have demonstrated, a listener decodes the surface structure of incoming speech into more abstract representations during clause breaks.[30] Accordingly, when we hear a unit of verse, we analyze each colon in turn during caesurae, which are nearly always clause breaks.

I would argue, then, both for stylistic and psycholinguistic reasons, that Ps. 119:53 should be analyzed as a bicolon in which the second colon shares the deep structure of the first, but in which only part of the underlying structure is represented on the surface. See the following analysis:

Indignation seizes me because of the wicked,	זלעפה אחזתני מרשעים
[Indignation seizes me because of] the forsakers of your teaching.	[זלעפה אחזתני מ]עזבי תורתך

The analysis is made probable stylistically by the presence of many other verses in Ps. 119 that manifest the same asymmetrical balance of cola. In most unambiguous cases the balance, or imbalance, is between a longer first colon and a shorter second one. An example is Ps. 119:103:

How sweet is your promise to my palate,	מַה־נִּמְלְצוּ לְחִכִּי אִמְרָתֶךָ
more than honey to my mouth.	מִדְּבַשׁ לְפִי

[30] In addition to the studies cited in E. L. Greenstein, "One More Step on the Staircase," *UF*, 9 (1977), 80–81, n. 27, see also Thomas G. Bever and David J. Townsend, "Perceptual Mechanisms and Formal Properties of Main and Subordinate Clauses," in William E. Cooper and Edward C. T. Walker, eds., *Sentence Processing* (Hillsdale, N.J., 1979), pp. 159–226; and David J. Townsend, David Ottaviano and Thomas G. Bever, "Immediate Memory for Words from Main and Subordinate Clauses at Different Age Levels," *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research*, 8 (1979), 83–101. The best general survey is J. M. Carroll and T. G. Bever, "Sentence Comprehension: A Case Study in the Relation of Knowledge and Perception," in Edward C. Carterette and Morton P. Friedman, eds., *Handbook of Perception, Volume VII: Language and Speech* (New York, 1976), pp. 299–344.

For the application of clausal processing to literary study, see also George L. Dillon, *Language Perception and the Reading of Literature* (Bloomington, 1978), pp. 30–59; and Donald C. Freeman, "The Strategy of Fusion: Dylan Thomas' Syntax," in Roger Fowler, ed., *Style and Structure in Language* (Ithaca, 1975), pp. 19–39.

The underlying representation of the second colon is:

[מה־נמלצו אמרתך] מדבש לפי

In this case most translations acknowledge the deep structure implicitly by inserting some of the deleted constituents into their rendering. The RSV, for example, renders the entire verse:

How sweet are thy words to my taste,
sweeter than honey to my mouth.[31]

Some critics may feel that in cases of large-scale deletion it would be simpler to assume that there is no clause break between cola, and that the second colon functions as a complement or in apposition to the clause in the first colon. Thus, in Ps. 119:53 עזבי תורתך, "the forsakers of your teaching," would be no more than an appositive to רשעים, "the wicked," of the preceding colon.[32] Militating against such a position are verses such as Isa. 14:8, in which the second colon means nothing unless it is understood as a small surface representation of only part of a much larger deep structure. The text reads:

Yea, the cypresses rejoice over you,	גַּם־בְּרוֹשִׁים שָׂמְחוּ לָךְ
the cedars of Lebanon.	אֲרָזֵי לְבָנוֹן

Clearly the underlying representation of the second colon is:

The cedars of Lebanon [rejoice over you].[33]	ארזי לבנון [שמחו לך]

I would also propose that we adjust our understanding of the concept of *complete* and *incomplete* parallelism.[34] Conventionally in Biblical research, complete parallelism describes two cola in which each constituent in the A colon finds a corresponding constituent in the surface structure of the B colon. Incomplete

[31] Cf. the NEB: "How sweet is thy promise in my mouth, sweeter on my tongue than honey." The translation of the NJV renders נמלצו twice but in different ways, and also omits לפי in the B colon: "How pleasing is Your word to my palate, sweeter than honey."

[32] Cf. already R. David Qimḥi in his commentary, ad loc. (ed. A. Darom [Jerusalem, 1967], p. 271).

[33] Contrast the KJV and TEV, which insert "and" before "cedars" and produce a compound subject rather than two clauses.

[34] See, e.g., Gray, *The Forms of Hebrew Poetry*, pp. 49, 59–64, and passim.

parallelism describes two cola in which certain constituents are deleted in the surface structure. These definitions cease to be appropriate when parallelism is comprehended as a repetition of syntactic patterning from any level in the derivation of surface structure from deep structure. What was formerly understood as "incomplete" is in fact all present and accounted for in the underlying representation.[35]

There is, however, some utility to the concept of complete and incomplete parallelism. Repetition need not mean that every element is repeated. Ben Jonson, for example, could rhyme the words *palate* and *salad*,[36] *wreath* and *breathe*,[37] even though the consonants /t/ and /d/, /θ/ and /ð/, differ in voicing. The rhyme, one could say, is incomplete because a voiced consonant answers to an unvoiced counterpart. Similarly, in parallelism the syntactic structure of one colon may repeat only in part, even when one takes the underlying relations into consideration. Ps. 105:44 will serve as our example:

He-gave them the-lands-of nations	וַיִּתֵּן לָהֶם אַרְצוֹת גּוֹיִם
And-the-property-of peoples they-inherited.	וַעֲמַל לְאֻמִּים יִירָשׁוּ

In this rather simple illustration—there are, of course, many more complicated ones—the adverbial phrase להם, "to them," of the first colon has no counterpart in any level of structure of the second colon. Otherwise, the syntactic patterns are identical.

I have now explained, at least in a rudimentary fashion, how I would look for, and identify, parallelism in Biblical verse. The method of analysis will become clearer (if not more palatable) as I endeavor to show the ways in which parallelism and variations in parallelism can control our responses to, and perception of, ancient Hebrew poetry.

With respect to the interaction of bard and audience, parallelism can contribute toward the engagement and disengagement of the listener or reader. As we saw above, many lines of Biblical verse are strictly parallel to the preceding line only in their deep structure. A transformation maps the underlying form onto the line as it appears to us. Often the transformation is an obvious

[35] Cf. Collins, "Line-Forms in Hebrew Poetry," p. 242.

[36] "Inviting a Friend to Supper."

[37] "To Celia."

grammatical deletion of the verb or of some other constituent. Occasionally an underlying sequence undergoes a passivizing, causative, or nominalizing transformation, and as a consequence manifests a surface shape that does not directly parallel the preceding line.

Languages are full of transformations, and we process incoming speech and decode the surface structure into its underlying representation automatically. Nevertheless, clauses that entail transformations have been found to demand more "effort," or "audience participation," than clauses in which the surface sequence more clearly reflects its deep structure.[38] Gaps in surface stimuli place a higher level of involvement on the perceiver. In elaborating this point and its wider implications Marshall McLuhan, in *Understanding Media* and other works,[39] differentiated between "hot" and "cool" media. Media that present a complete pattern of stimuli are "hot"; media that present an incomplete pattern, the parts of which suggest—and we accordingly perceive as—a whole, are "cool." Television, McLuhan explains, is addictive because it projects not a complete image but a composite of dots (in black-and-white) or dashes (in color). The audience is engaged by having to form the complete image in its mind. Parallelism, too, runs both "hot" and "cool." Cool involves greater processing by the audience and is therefore engaging; hot presents a full stimulus and tends to disengage.

Nowhere does parallelism demand more audience involvement than in certain forms of the "staircase" or "climactic" variation. The fact that the staircase proper comprises at least three lines in and of itself acts to retard the verse and heighten our perception of it.[40] But, as I have explained at length elsewhere,[41] two types of

[38] For critical surveys of such research, see Jerry A. Fodor, T. G. Bever, and M. F. Garrett, *The Psychology of Language* (New York, 1974), pp. 319ff.; and Virginia Valian, "The Wherefores and Therefores of the Competence-Performance Distinction," in Cooper and Walker, eds., *Sentence Processing*, pp. 1–26. Cf. also Virginia Valian and Roger Wales, "What's What: Talkers Help Listeners Hear and Understand by Clarifying Sentential Relations," *Cognition*, 4 (1976), 155–76.

[39] See especially Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New American Library ed.: New York, 1964), pp. 36–45. Cf. also idem, *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (London, 1962), and *Counterblast* (London, 1969).

[40] Cf. Alonso Schökel, *Estudios de poética hebrea*, pp. 217–20; Gitay, "A Study of Amos's Art of Speech" (see n. 9, above), 307. For the use of the tricolon as a closural device, cf. Gordis, *Poets, Prophets, and Sages*, p. 70.

[41] Greenstein, "Two Variations of Grammatical Parallelism," especially pp. 96–105; and idem, "One More Step on the Staircase."

staircase construction go even further to tax our participation. In one of these types the first line of the staircase is syntactically incomplete. Since we process incoming speech clause by clause, we must suspend processing until the completion of the clause is presented in the second line. Our perception is kept on edge, so to speak, during such a staircase.[42] The second type of staircase introduces the same phrase in the first and second lines, but in the second line the syntactic function of a word or phrase shifts, so that we must do a sort of double-take and analyze that word or phrase twice. The phrase serves a double function, but we cannot perceive it in both functions at the same time. I have called this type "reanalysis," and it will be illustrated in the examples I am about to give from Ps. 77 and 92.[43]

In a number of Biblical psalms the staircase holds our attention on a verse that leads to a thematic climax. In Ps. 92:10 the staircase

> Here-are your-enemies, O YHWH,
> Here-are your-enemies perishing
> Dispersing-are all workers-of iniquity

marks a pivotal point in the theme of the text. Before, evildoers proliferate; after, the psalmist, a pious devotee of the Lord, flourishes. In the intervening staircase the Lord does away with

[42] See my "Two Variations of Grammatical Parallelism," 101–03, for illustrations. When I composed that article, I was unaware of a remarkable predecession of my observation, at least in general, by Theodore H. Robinson, *The Poetry of the Old Testament* (London, 1947), p. 32: "The first member is obviously incomplete, and creates in us a strong expectation of an object to follow the verb. But there is a break in the flow of thought, and we are held, as it were, in suspense."

Kugel (*The Idea of Biblical Poetry*, p. 55, n. 133) has faulted my criteria for identifying the conditions in which analysis would be suspended, calling them "arbitrary." I identified two specific conditions in Ugaritic and Biblical verse for the suspension of syntactic processing: the presentation of a transitive verb without the requisite direct object (cf. Robinson's remark, just cited), and a break in the delivery of an idiomatic expression which is normally, or always, resistant to ellipsis. I supported my contentions with textual documentation and psycholinguistic evidence, of which Kugel takes no apparent account. I must conclude, therefore, that it is Kugel's assertions which are arbitrary.

For further discussion of the syntactic cues provided by verbs, see Joan Bresnan, "A Realistic Transformational Grammar," in Morris Halle, J. Bresnan, and G. A. Miller, eds., *Linguistic Theory and Psychological Reality* (Cambridge, Mass., 1978), pp. 1–59.

[43] See my "Two Variations of Grammatical Parallelism," pp. 97–100, and "One More Step on the Staircase," pp. 80–86, for detailed discussion.

his, i.e., his worshiper's, adversaries. The reanalysis is occasioned by the shift of "your-enemies" from being the predicate of the first line to its being the immediate subject of the predicate "they-perish" in the second line. Similarly, in Ps. 77 a suppliant petitions God to relinquish his anger and have compassion on him. The petitioner knows that God can turn history around, because God has manifested wonders to his people before. It is the staircase in v. 17 that documents the Lord's marvelous power:

They-see-you the-waters, O YHWH,
They-see-you, the-waters whirl
Yea, they-roil, (do) the-deeps.

Here reanalysis responds to the shift of "the-waters" from being subject of "they-see-you" to being the subject of "whirl" in the second line.

There seem to be at least two staircases in the psalm contained in Exod. 15, the "Song at the Sea." The first one (vv. 6–7a)[44] comes precisely at the point when the singer turns from describing YHWH's heroism for his cohort to addressing the Lord directly and praising him:

Your-right-hand, O YHWH, mighty-in-power
Your-right-hand, O YHWH, shatters the-enemy
With-your-great prowess it-destroys your-foes.

The singer continues to refer to God in the second person and resumes his account of the battle between YHWH and his human adversaries. Again, when the singer interrupts his narration and bursts into beatification, the staircase pattern serves as his vehicle (v. 10):

Who-is-like-you among-the-gods, O YHWH,
Who-is-like-you adored among-the-holy-ones
Revered in-praises, doer-of wonders?

[44] See Chaim Cohen, "Studies in Early Israelite Poetry, I: An Unrecognized Case of Three-Line Staircase Parallelism in the Song of the Sea," *JANES*, 7 (1975), 13–17; contrast S. E. Loewenstamm, *Biblica*, 56 (1975), 110. For certain aspects of the following observations on Exod. 15, cf. Freedman, *Pottery, Poetry, and Prophecy*, pp. 188–90. On the significance of switching from third to second person reference to God in Biblical psalmody, cf. Meir Weiss, *The Bible and Modern Literary Theory*, 2nd ed. (Jerusalem, 1967), pp. 131–32 (in Hebrew); cf. also König, *Stilistik, Rhetorik, Poetik*, pp. 238–39.

As I mentioned above, "cool" parallelism, which entails deletions and/or other transformations, engages the audience. "Hot" parallelism establishes a distance between the text and the audience and tends to disengage. It is one of at least five ways in which parallelism can effect closure in a unit of verse.[45]

In a paper that has not yet appeared in print,[46] Yehoshua Gitay demonstrates that Isa. 1:2–20 constitutes a single speech which has four rhetorical sections: an introduction (vv. 2–3), a statement of facts (vv. 4–9), a "confirmation" (an exposition of his thesis; vv. 10–17), and an epilogue (vv. 18–20). Not, I believe, coincidentally, each of these sections achieves a closure at least partly by means of what I have called "hot" parallelism. Consider the lines which close the various sections. The first is closed by v. 3b:

Israel does-not know	יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא יָדָע
My-people does-not comprehend.	עַמִּי לֹא הִתְבּוֹנָן

Significantly the preceding line is expressed in "cool" parallelism. The next section ends with v. 9b:

Then[47] like-Sodom would-we-have-been	כִּמְעָט כִּסְדֹם הָיִינוּ
Like-Gomorrah would-we-have-seemed.	לַעֲמֹרָה דָּמִינוּ

The third section closes with a series of phrases in parallel (vv. 16d–17):

Stop doing-evil	חִדְלוּ הָרֵעַ
Learn doing-good	לִמְדוּ הֵיטֵב
Seek-out justice	דִּרְשׁוּ מִשְׁפָּט
Straighten the-oppressed	אַשְּׁרוּ חָמוֹץ

[45] For the phenomenon in general, see Barbara Herrnstein Smith, *Poetic Closure* (Chicago, 1968); for parallelism as a closural device, see especially pp. 168–71. For some semantically determined types of closure in Biblical verse, cf. Weiss, *The Bible and Modern Literary Theory*, pp. 141–46 (in Hebrew).

[46] Dr. Gitay presented this paper at the annual meeting of the National Association of Professors of Hebrew in the fall of 1980.

[47] Despite the Masoretic division of clauses, כמעט "then" begins a new clause, as Ps. 81:14–15, for example, makes clear. The B colon of this couplet entails the nonoptional and minor deletion of כמעט.

Do-justice to-the-fatherless	שִׁפְטוּ יָתוֹם
Take-the-case-of the-widow.	רִיבוּ אַלְמָנָה

The final section ends with two couplets that parallel one another (vv. 19–20b) in "hot" form:

If you-hearken and-you-listen, the-bounty-of the-land will-you-eat,	אִם־תֹּאבוּ וּשְׁמַעְתֶּם טוּב הָאָרֶץ תֹּאכֵלוּ
But if-you-refuse and-you-rebel, by-sword will-you-be-eaten.[48]	וְאִם־תְּמָאֲנוּ וּמְרִיתֶם חֶרֶב תְּאֻכְלוּ

A second way by which parallelism can effect closure is by presenting a series of lines in which the first and last are clearly parallel in structure. This of course is only one exemplar of the more general phenomenon of *inclusio*.[49] The repetition of an

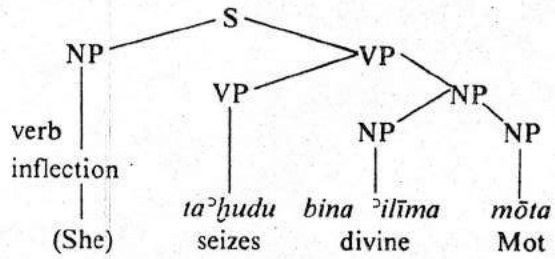
[48] The phrase חֶרֶב תְּאֻכְלוּ has posed philological difficulties since ancient times. The *pu'al* form is only rarely attested for the verb אכל, but one finds it in Nah. 1:10 and Neh. 2:3, 13, for example, where it is said of fire; see also Berlin, "Grammatical Aspects of Parallelism" (see n. 15, above), p. 24. The word חרב, "sword," is employed as an adverbial accusative, viz., "by the sword," a usage which is also attested in the Bible; cf. Carl Brockelmann, *Hebräische Syntax* (Neukirchen, 1956), §94b. Both the Targum and the Peshitta supply the preposition *b* for clarity, but it should not be construed, as in *BH*^{3}, as a variant reading. Some scholars have been unwilling to accept the *lectio difficilior* in the received text and have proposed emendations; see, e.g., Moshe Held, "Studies in Comparative Semitic Lexicography," *Assyriological Studies*, 16 (Chicago, 1965), p. 398; similarly, the NEB renders, "locust-beans shall be your only food." Apart from its irregularity, however, there is nothing inapposite in the Masoretic reading. The Bible often speaks of the sword (חרב) devouring (אכל); e.g., Deut 32:42; 2 Sam. 2:26, 11:25; Isa. 31:8; Jer. 12:12, 46:14; Nah. 3:15. What really bothers certain moderns (see those cited above) is that being devoured by the sword (Isa. 1:21) forms an antithesis to eating the bounty of the land (v. 20). The antithesis to consuming, it is felt, should be something on the order of famine. We have no right, though, to enforce a rigid semantic logic on the poetry of Isaiah, and in fact "sword" and "famine" are often linked in prophetic texts; e.g., Isa. 51:19; Jer. 5:12, 14:15, 16, 44:12; Ezek. 7:15, 14:21.

[49] Cf. already König, *Stilistik, Rhetorik, Poetik*, p. 350; and the "envelope figure" in Richard G. Moulton, *The Literary Study of the Bible* (Boston, 1899), p. 56 and passim; cf. also E. Z. Melamed, "Patriarchal Dialogue in Genesis," *Tarbiz*, 20 (1949), 23 (in Hebrew); Leon J. Liebreich, "The Compilation of the Book of Isaiah," *JQR*, 47 (1956–57), 114–38; especially 115–16, 128. For the widespread use of this device, cf. Alexander Heidel, *The Gilgamesh Epic and Old Testament Parallels* (Chicago, 1946), pp. 15–16. For an illustration of "*inclusio*" with some bibliography, see Freedman, *Pottery, Poetry, and Prophecy*, p. 263.

entire line more or less verbatim, as in Ps. 8:2, 10 and Eccl. 1:2 and 12:8,[50] is rather obvious. The repetition of a syntactic pattern is more subtle but can nonetheless be perceptible.[51] Consider the following case in the Ugaritic myth of Baal (I AB 2:28–36). When Anat seeks revenge on Mot for having destroyed her brother Baal, the text begins with a solitary line:

ta'ḫudu bina 'ilīma mōta She-seizes divine Mot.

The underlying syntactic structure of this line is:

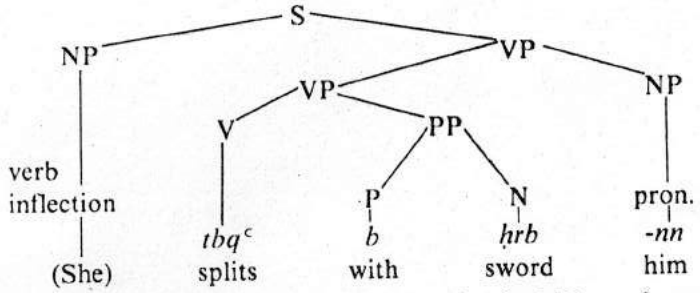


There follow five lines that vary this structure by adding adverbial prepositional phrases. They are all of the form:

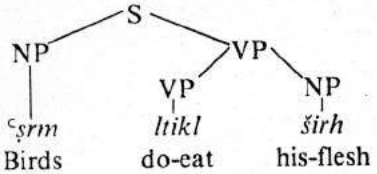
[50] Cf. H. L. Ginsberg, *Studies in Koheleth* (New York, 1950), p. 15.

[51] Cf., e.g., Jack R. Lundbom, "Poetic Structure and Prophetic Rhetoric in Hosea," *VT*, 29 (1979), 300–08. In this article Lundbom continues a line of inquiry begun by D. N. Freedman and demonstrates that in two pericopae in Hosea, 4:11–14 and 8:9–13, the units begin and end with single cola that are parallel to one another; cf. Freedman, *Pottery, Poetry, and Prophecy*, p. 46. Freedman and Lundbom, however, understand this structure to entail the breaking up of a bicolon into halves, forming a frame for the passage. I would not regard this as the break-up of a couplet, unless that couplet can be shown to enjoy an independent existence.

On the perceptibility of "parallelism at a distance," see now Jakobson, "A Postscript to . . . Grammar of Poetry" (see n. 3, above), especially p. 28; cf. Levin, *Linguistic Structures in Poetry*, pp. 35–37. I am not at all confident, however, that the break-up of a "parallel pair" of *words* across many lines of a poem can be perceived, as is proposed in, e.g., John S. Kselman, "Design and Structure in Hebrew Poetry," in Paul J. Achtemeier, ed., *Society of Biblical Literature 1980 Seminar Papers* (Chico, California, 1980), pp. 1–16. As studies of sentence perception show (see references in nn. 30 and 38, above), we decode and discard the particular words of a clause once we have processed it, so that I don't know how an audience could keep track of an individual A-word over several lines. Structural patterns can be retained far more successfully.



The unit closes with a series of lines each of which conforms to the structure of the solitary line that began the unit:



The parallelism of the last series of lines with the initial line effects closure.

A more subtle instance appears in Song of Songs 5:11–16. The lines consist of a number of syntactic constituents, most of which bear semantic interrelations, too:[52]

v. 11: his-head finest gold (A) his-locks curls (B) black as-a-raven (B_1')

v. 12: his-eyes like-doves by water courses (A′) bathing in-milk (A_1)
sitting by pools(?) (A_2)

v. 13: his-cheeks like-bed(s)-of spice (A′) generating aromatics (A_1)
his-lips lilies (B) dripping fluid myrrh (B_1)

[52] The translation that follows has benefited much by consulting Marvin H. Pope, *The Song of Songs* (Garden City, N.Y., 1977), pp. 534–50. The interested reader is directed thereto for philological discussion and citation of pertinent texts.

v. 14: his-hands bands-of-gold (A) inlaid with-tarshish (A_1)
his-loins ivory plate (B) blanketed (with) sapphires (B_1)

v. 15: his-legs pillars-of marble (A) set into sockets-of gold (A_1)
his-look like-Lebanon (B′) choicest among-cedars (B_1)

v. 16: his-palate sweets (A) and-all-of-him dainties . . . (B)

A represents a nominal sentence in which a part of the lover's body is complemented by a metaphorical predicate. A prime indicates a simile rather than a metaphor. *A* with a sub-numeral indicates a(nother) predicate of one of the noun-phrases in *A*. *B* represents the introduction of another body part together with its predicate, and *B*-sub-1 indicates a predicate relation to one of the noun-phrases in *B*. Verse 12 varies the structure of v. 11, then v. 13 expands the structure of v. 12. Verses 14 and 15 duplicate the form of v. 13. The closing verse of the unit (v. 16) begins exactly the same as the opening verse (v. 11), contributing toward closure. The closure is reinforced semantically, too. The body parts begin with the head (vv. 11–13), move down to the torso (v. 14) and legs (v. 15), and return (v. 16) to the head. The phrase כֻּלּוֹ, "all of him," and the comment that follows ("this is my beloved, this is my companion, O daughters of Jerusalem") aptly complete the unit.

A third way in which parallelism effects closure is by repeating the deep structure of the next to last line with a modification in surface structure, especially chiasm.[53] An example is Ps. 81:17:

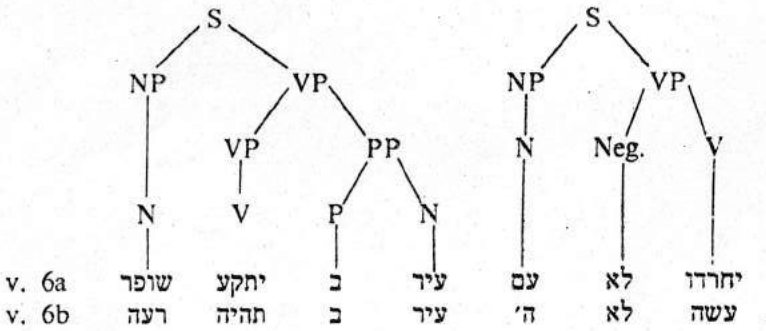
He would-feed-him from-the-fat of-wheat	וַיַּאֲכִילֵהוּ מֵחֶלֶב חִטָּה
And-from-the-rock honey I-shall-sate-you.	וּמִצּוּר דְּבַשׁ אַשְׂבִּיעֶךָ

[53] For chiasm in the Bible, see Andersen, *The Sentence in Biblical Hebrew* (see n. 12, above), pp. 119–40; cf. also Anthony R. Ceresko, "The Function of Chiasmus in Hebrew Poetry," *CBQ*, 40 (1978), 1–10.

A more striking example is the one in Deut. 32:21, in which four parallel lines are paired into two couplets, which are in turn parallel to each other. The fourth line produces closure by inverting the surface order of constituents that obtained in the preceding three lines:

They impassioned-me with-a-no-god	הֵם קִנְאוּנִי בְלֹא־אֵל
They vexed-me with-their-vapors	כִּעֲסוּנִי בְּהַבְלֵיהֶם
So-I shall-impassion-them with-a-no-people	וַאֲנִי אַקְנִיאֵם בְּלֹא־עָם
With-a-fool nation shall-I-vex-them.[54]	בְּגוֹי נָבָל אַכְעִיסֵם

The fourth way in which parallelism can achieve closure is by setting up a series of lines that are roughly parallel in structure, and then rounding them off with two lines that are neatly parallel to one another. It is something like the sharpening of a focus and the tightening of a vise. A case in point is Amos 3:3–6, where there are seven bicola in a row. The structure of the first (v. 3) closely parallels that of the third (v. 4b). The structure of the second (v. 4a) closely parallels the fourth (v. 5a). The fifth provides something of a transition, for while it is semantically closer to the lines that precede it, its structure is more like the two lines that follow it. The surface structures of the last two bicola (v. 6) match precisely:



[54] Cf. Geller, *Parallelism in Early Hebrew Poetry*, p. 368. Note that the syntactic structure of these four lines, each of which is a complete sentence, is AA′AA′, while the semantic pattern is AA′BB′ (where A = what they did to me, and B = what I'll do to them) and the pattern of lexical repetition is ABAB (where A = . . . בלא √קנא and B = . . . ב √כעס). Because Biblical (and other) poetry is often woven out of a number of overlapping yet distinct patterns, (cf.

The line of thought that the prophet develops beginning in v. 3 culminates in the logic of v. 6, and the crystal perfect symmetry of the final lines consummates the closure.

Yet a fifth way in which parallelism can accomplish closure is by capping off a series of parallel lines with one that grossly deviates. An example is Jer. 7:34:

I-shall-cause-to cease from-the-towns-of Judah	וְהִשְׁבַּתִּי מֵעָרֵי יְהוּדָה
and-from-the-plazas-of Jerusalem	וּמֵחֻצוֹת יְרוּשָׁלִַם
the-sound-of jubilation and-the-sound-of rejoicing	קוֹל שָׂשׂוֹן וְקוֹל שִׂמְחָה
the-sound-of the-groom and-the-sound-of the-bride	קוֹל חָתָן וְקוֹל כַּלָּה
for a-ruin will the-land become.	כִּי לְחָרְבָּה תִּהְיֶה הָאָרֶץ

The abrupt syntactic turn of the last line strikingly heralds the sudden catastrophe which Jeremiah foresees. Another example is Job 6:5–6:

Would a-wild-ass bray over grass-land?	הֲיִנְהַק־פֶּרֶא עַל־דֶּשֶׁא
Would an-ox whine over his-fodder?	אִם יִגְעֶה־שׁוֹר עַל־בְּלִילוֹ
Would the-insipid be-eaten without salt?	הֲיֵאָכֵל תָּפֵל מִבְּלִי־מֶלַח
Is-there any-taste in-the-brine-of . . .?	אִם־יֶשׁ־טַעַם בְּרִיר חַלָּמוּת

Here three verbal clauses are closed by a nominal sentence, and the logic is drawn to its conclusion (no matter how philologically difficult it may be to interpret!). The break in pattern has the added effect of emphasizing the point at the end of the analogies.[55]

Geller, ibid., p. 369), we do best to keep them apart. This is one of the reasons why I wish to reserve the term parallelism for only one type of patterning—syntactic repetition.

[55] A former undergraduate student of mine, Beth Pearson, pointed out in a seminar paper for Barnard College that Ps. 96 achieves closure by capping off a long series of imperatives with a declarative bicolon. For a similar device on a smaller scale, see Job 3:26. For the effect of breaking another type of stylistic pattern, see Gitay, "A Study of Amos's Art of Speech," p. 306. For the phenomenon in Biblical prose syntax, see e.g., Sean E. McEvenue, *The Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer* (Rome, 1971), p. 34.

I have discussed the psycholinguistic basis for the perceptual effects produced by syntactic deviation in my "Two Variations of Grammatical Parallelism," pp. 88–89.

Most significantly, parallelism contributes to the meaning of Biblical verse by structuring the ways in which we perceive its content. The presentation of lines in parallelism has the effect of reinforcing the semantic association between them. It has long been observed that when discrete materials appear to us in similar form, we are led to seek, and find, some meaningful correlation between them. This, for example, is the underpinning principle of rhyme: rhyme creates or tightens an association between two or more words or phrases. Repetition of syntactic structure, which is what I have explained as parallelism, can perform the same function.[56] The psychological nexus between semantic sense and syntactic structure has been demonstrated experimentally. When subjects were presented with a sentence of a particular grammatical form, and were then asked to produce another sentence having the same form, they tended to formulate a sentence that not only mirrored the structure of the model but also echoed something of its semantics. For example, the test sentence *The lazy student failed the exam* elicited such responses as, *The smart girl passed the test, The industrious pupil passed the course, The brilliant boy studied the paper.*[57]

Consider Prov. 15:20:

A-wise son gladdens a-father	בֵּן חָכָם יְשַׂמַּח אָב
and-a-foolish man reviles his-mother.	וּכְסִיל אָדָם בּוֹזֶה אִמּוֹ

Here the parallel structure of the two cola binds together two sides of the same coin. For another illustration, see Judg. 5:26a:

Her-hand to-the-tentpin she-extends	יָדָהּ לַיָּתֵד תִּשְׁלַחְנָה
and-her-right-hand to-the-mallet-of workers.	וִימִינָהּ לְהַלְמוּת עָמֲלִים

[56] Cf., e.g., Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry*, p. 34: "The function of the pairs [of words distributed between the two halves of a couplet] is no different from the use of similar syntactic structures, alliteration, etc.—all establish the sense of correspondence between A and B." On the other hand, by paying little regard to syntactic patterning, Kugel (pp. 17–18) misses the fact that the two parts of couplets, such as Ps. 111:5, share the same structure and are thereby brought into closer association ideationally.

[57] H. H. Clark, "The Prediction of Recall Patterns in Simple Active Sentences," *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior*, 5 (1966), 99–106.

Here the parallel structure reinforces the nexus of the two distinct actions by which Yael prepares to kill Sisera. That two separate actions are being delineated finds corroboration in the prose version of the episode in the preceding chapter (4:21).[58]

Because the traditional label "'synonymous' parallelism" has been often misleading, it is important to emphasize that more often than not parallelism serves to reinforce the semantic association between two somewhat different concepts or images. For a case in point consider Ps. 23:2:

In-pastures-of grass he-lays-me-down	בִּנְאוֹת דֶּשֶׁא יַרְבִּיצֵנִי
By-water-of tranquility he-guides-me.	עַל-מֵי מְנֻחוֹת יְנַהֲלֵנִי

Lying in the grass and watering by a pool are clearly distinct events. But of course they share the conceit that the psalmist is a sheep and God its tender shepherd, and it is the common syntactic construction of the two lines that galvanizes their association.[59]

Parallelism also functions to produce a meaningful relation between two propositions that possess no inherent interconnection. An example is Job 5:19:

In-six straits he-will-save-you	בְּשֵׁשׁ צָרוֹת יַצִּילֶךָּ
and-in-seven harm will-not-touch you.	וּבְשֶׁבַע לֹא-יִגַּע בְּךָ רָע

The parallelism associates the distinct propositions that God will save and that harm will not come by linking them: God's

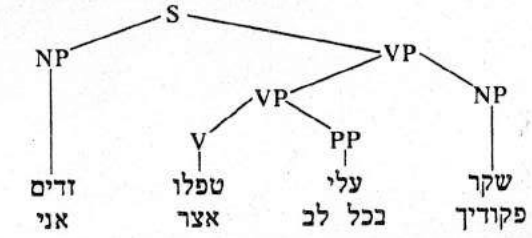
[58] Cf., e.g., C. F. Burney *The Book of Judges* (reprint, New York, 1970), p. 152; O'Connor, *Hebrew Verse Structure*, pp. 51–52; contrast, e.g., Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry*, p. 43 and n. 119. Kugel's point that ימין does not necessarily denote "right" is unfounded. Nor do I concede to M. Dahood and others that Hebrew יד or Ugaritic *yd* can by itself mean "left hand," even though it is the left hand that is referred to by implication in certain contexts. For יד as "left hand," see, e.g., Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms I*, p. 163, who is supported by Robert G. Boling, *Judges* (Garden City, N.Y., 1975), p. 114. For a proper critique of this view see Marvin H. Pope, "Marginalia to M. Dahood's *Ugaritic-Hebrew Philology*," *JBL*, 85 (1966), especially pp. 456–58.

[59] M. Dahood (*Psalms I*, p. 146) suggests that Ps. 23:3b ינחני במעגלי צדק is parallel directly to v. 2a; but see Moshe Held, "Hebrew *maʿgāl*: A Study in Lexical Parallelism," *JANES*, 6 (1971), especially pp. 111–12.

salvation is the antidote to calamity. A similar instance is Ps. 119:69:

They-smear on-me lies, menaces (do)	טָפְלוּ עָלַי שֶׁקֶר זֵדִים
I with-full heart shall-guard your-orders.	אֲנִי בְכָל לֵב אֶצֹר פִּקּוּדֶיךָ

Note that although these lines have no word-pairs or other stylistic features between them, and although they are far from synonymous, they are precisely parallel:



The parallel structure between the two lines reinforces their ideational bond: the psalmist feels secure against his detractors because he trusts that the God whom he obeys will look out for him.

If syntactic symmetry strengthens semantics, a break in the syntactic pattern can reinforce a shift in the thematic flow. The manipulation of syntax to convey meaning is a pronounced feature of Biblical style. For example, a semantic contrast may be underscored by a change in verb-form and word-order. In the following two verses such switches highlight the contradistinction between Rebecca and Isaac and between Ruth and Orpah:

Isaac loved Esau ... but Rebecca is-loving Jacob (Gen. 25:28).	וַיֶּאֱהַב יִצְחָק אֶת־עֵשָׂו . . . וְרִבְקָה אֹהֶבֶת אֶת־יַעֲקֹב
Orpah kissed her-mother-in-law, but Ruth cleaved to-her (Ruth 1:14).	וַתִּשַּׁק עָרְפָּה לַחֲמוֹתָהּ וְרוּת דָּבְקָה־בָּהּ

Parallelism can work in the same way. Consider first Ps. 97:1:

YHWH reigns	ה׳ מָלָךְ
Let-rejoice the-land	תָּגֵל הָאָרֶץ
Let-be-glad the-many coastlands.	יִשְׂמְחוּ אִיִּים רַבִּים

The underlying syntactic structure of each of these three lines is the same. But the second and third lines present responses to the first. A switch in word-order from subject-verb to verb-subject sharpens the semantic shift. Now consider Ps. 1. Following the initial phrase אַשְׁרֵי הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר, "Happy is-the-man who," in v. 1a, there follow three variations on the same idea, each parallel in structure to the others:

did-not walk in-the-council-of the-wicked	לֹא הָלַךְ בַּעֲצַת רְשָׁעִים
and-in-the-path-of sinners did-not stand	וּבְדֶרֶךְ חַטָּאִים לֹא עָמָד
and-in-the-sitting-of the-scornful did-not sit.	וּבְמוֹשַׁב לֵצִים לֹא יָשָׁב

Similarly the shared fate of the wicked and the sinners is expressed parallelistically in v. 5:

Therefore the-wicked will-not-stand-up in-judgment	עַל־כֵּן לֹא־יָקֻמוּ רְשָׁעִים בַּמִּשְׁפָּט
nor-sinners in-the-company-of the-righteous.	וְחַטָּאִים בַּעֲדַת צַדִּיקִים

However, the thematic contrast that is drawn in the next verse between the Lord's attitude toward the righteous and that toward the wicked sharpens as the syntactic position of דרך צדיקים, "the-path-of the-righteous," as the object of the verb is reversed by the syntactic position of דרך רשעים, "the-path-of the-wicked," which functions as the subject of the verb in the next clause.[60] The first clause, dealing with the Lord's love of the pious, has the structure verb-subject-object:

[60] Cf. Weiss, *The Bible and Modern Literary Theory*, pp. 121–23 (in Hebrew). Weiss attributes this syntactic permutation to a stylistic device by which the righteous are mentioned in an active sentence and the wicked in a passive or nominal sentence; cf. Paul Auvray, "Le psaume I: Notes de grammaire et d'exégèse," *RB*, 53 (1946), especially pp. 369–70; see further Rémi Lack, "Le psaume I—Une analyse structurale," *Biblica*, 57 (1976), 159. M. O'Connor (oral communication) explains the syntax as an instance of "blasphemy parallelism," in which a negative activity by God is conveyed by a circumlocution that avoids explicit reference to the divine name; see also O'Connor, *Hebrew Verse Structure*, p. 12. One may compare this to the use of the passive voice in the Gospel of Luke to circumvent the association of the divine name with punitive judgment; see

For-favors YHWH the-path-of the-righteous.	כִּי־יוֹדֵעַ ה' דֶּרֶךְ צַדִּיקִים

The following clause, describing the fate of the sinful, fails to parallel the preceding one and takes an intransitive form—subject-verb:

but-the-path-of the-wicked perishes.	וְדֶרֶךְ רְשָׁעִים תֹּאבֵד

In this psalm the correspondence of theme and structure is clearly demonstrated.

In the following example the manipulation of parallelism gives a well-defined shape to the semantic substance of the poem. The text comes from Num. 21:28–29:

A	For fire has-erupted from Heshbon	כִּי אֵשׁ יָצְאָה מֵחֶשְׁבּוֹן
B	flame from-the-city-of Sihon	לֶהָבָה מִקִּרְיַת סִיחֹן
C	It-has-consumed the-plain-of Moab	אָכְלָה עַר מוֹאָב
D	the-citizens-of the-levees-of the-Arnon	בַּעֲלֵי בָּמוֹת אַרְנֹן
F	Woe-is-you, O-Moab	אוֹי־לְךָ מוֹאָב
F	You-perish, O-people-of Chemosh	אָבַדְתָּ עַם־כְּמוֹשׁ
G	He-has-rendered your-sons fugitives	נָתַן בָּנָיו פְּלֵיטָם
H	and-your-daughters into-captivity	וּבְנֹתָיו בַּשְּׁבִית
I	to-the-king-of the-Amorite, Sihon.	לְמֶלֶךְ אֱמֹרִי סִיחוֹן

These lines comprise three sections: lines A through D, lines E and F, and lines G through I. In the first section each line is syntactically dependent upon the line before it. The four lines form two couplets, and the verb of the first line is deleted in the second. The second couplet, however, spreads the syntax of the first from an intransitive construction to a transitive one, just as the destructive Amorite fire first emerges in Heshbon and then spreads to burn Moab.[61] Following these four interdependent

Joachim Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, tr. S. H. Hooke (London, 1954), p. 113 and n. 36, and p. 135 and n. 58 (I thank Mervin Fry for referring me to this book). While the explanations by Weiss and O'Connor may be correct, my analysis, like that of Lack cited above, goes further in treating the significance of the syntactic shift in Ps. 1:6 in the immediate context of the psalm.

[61] The second couplet bridges the preceding and succeeding ones through its diction, too. If one examines the words that fill the line-final syntactic slots within the parallel structures, one finds the following pattern: in lines A-B place ("Heshbon") // place ("city of Sihon"); in lines E-F people ("Moab" in the masculine) // people ("people of Chemosh"). In the transitional couplet, lines C-D, place ("plain of Moab") // people ("citizens of the levees of the Arnon").

The pattern would be spoiled were we to emend בעלי, "citizens of," to בלעה, "it swallowed," with certain critics; e.g., J. W. Rothstein, *Hebräische Poesie* (Leipzig, 1914), pp. 103–04, n. 6; *BH*^{3}, ad loc. Fire does not "swallow" in Biblical literature; בלע can be said of persons (e.g., Prov. 19:28) or of personified objects (e.g., Gen. 41:24; Exod. 15:12), but not of fire. The emendation to בערה, "burn" (cf. Rothstein, loc. cit.), presupposes a gross scribal error and neglects to note that בער is used as an intransitive predicate of "fire" in the *qal* conjugation and never as a predicate of "fire" in the *pi'el*.

lines, the second section, a subjective ejaculation of pity or despair, strikes us as even more startling, for its syntactic pattern departs radically from that of the preceding section. The third section, beginning with line G, reverts to the syntax of line C. Both lines H and I are dependent on G, but while H repeats the structure of G, differing by no more than a typical deletion of the verb, line I extends that structure and by so varying effects a closure.

Just as parallelism serves to enhance thematic similarities, it may also bring out more fully thematic oppositions. It has been noted in Biblical prose, for example,[62] that the ironic opposition between וַיָּזֵד יַעֲקֹב נָזִיד, "Jacob potted a-pottage" (Gen. 25:29), and וַיִּבֶז עֵשָׂו אֶת־הַבְּכֹרָה, "Esau despised the-birthright" (Gen. 25:34), is cemented by the symmetrical construction of the two clauses. In like fashion, Deut. 32 highlights the unfortunate contrast between YHWH's kindness to Israel and Israel's disloyalty to YHWH by formulating their character traits in identical patterns. אֵל אֱמוּנָה וְאֵין עָוֶל, "God-of trustworthiness, not (God-of) treachery" (v. 4), contrasts with עַם נָבָל וְלֹא חָכָם, "A-people foolish, not (a-people) wise" (v. 6). A God who צַדִּיק וְיָשָׁר הוּא, "Righteous and-upright is-he" (v. 4), is contrasted with Israel, דּוֹר עִקֵּשׁ וּפִתַּלְתֹּל, "A-generation crooked and-twisted" (v. 5). This function of parallelism is a favorite among the proverbs, where structural repetition leaves semantic contrast all the plainer:

The-plans-of the-righteous are-justice	מַחְשְׁבוֹת צַדִּיקִים מִשְׁפָּט
The-schemes-of the-wicked are-deceit (Prov. 12:5).	תַּחְבֻּלוֹת רְשָׁעִים מִרְמָה
The-light-of the-righteous will-shine	אוֹר צַדִּיקִים יִשְׂמָח

[62] J. P. Fokkelman, *Narrative Art in Genesis* (Assen, 1975), p. 97.

but-the-lamp-of the-wicked will-go-out (Prov. 13:9).[63]	וְנֵר רְשָׁעִים יִדְעָךְ

We have seen it also in the preaching of Isaiah ben Amoz quoted in a different connection above (Isa. 1:16–17):

Stop doing-evil	חִדְלוּ הָרֵעַ
Learn doing-good.	לִמְדוּ הֵיטֵב

Finally, parallelism can present the evidence and leave it to the audience to decide the case. It creates a poignant irony in the following starkly paratactic listing from the Second (or Third) Isaiah (Isa. 66:3):[64]

The-slaughterer-of an-ox (is)	שׁוֹחֵט הַשּׁוֹר
The-smiter-of a-man	מַכֵּה־אִישׁ
The-sacrificer-of a-lamb (is)	זוֹבֵחַ הַשֶּׂה
The-mangler-of a-dog	עוֹרֵף כֶּלֶב
The-raiser-of a-cereal-offering (is)	מַעֲלֵה מִנְחָה
(The-raiser-of) pig's blood	דַּם־חֲזִיר
The-burner-of frankincense (is)	מַזְכִּיר לְבֹנָה
The-beatifier-of a-vanity.	מְבָרֵךְ אָוֶן

Here the hypocrisy of perfunctory ritual is evoked by a series of equations. The equations, however, find their expression neither in vocabulary nor in function words, neither in copulas nor in conjunctions. This is about as close as one can get to uncovering semantics in sheer parallelism. Sameness of form suggests identity of substances. Although parallelism as a structural artifice has no meaning in and of itself,[65] by controlling the ways by which words reach their destination parallelism always has meaning.

[63] For a fine philological discussion of this verse, see William McKane, *Proverbs* (London, 1970), p. 461.

[64] For the interpretation assumed here, cf. e.g., James Muilenburg, "The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66," *IDB*, 5 (New York, 1956), 761–62. For the "equative relationship" between the parallel phrases in this list, cf. Andersen, *The Sentence in Biblical Hebrew*, p. 58.

[65] Cf., e.g., Weiss, *The Bible and Modern Literary Theory*, p. 117 (in Hebrew). Similarly, "the function of meter is to heighten attention to the words as such" (Delmore Schwartz, cited in Atlas, *Delmore Schwartz*, p. 180), and "it is the meanings of words that make . . . sounds carriers of some expressive meaning" (Benjamin Hrushovski, "The Meaning of Sound Patterns in Poetry," *Poetics Today*, 2/1a [Autumn 1980], 42).